

Slowing the Spread of COVID-19: Guidance for Livestock Competitions and Events

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The Tennessee Department of Agriculture knows that the COVID-19 pandemic is making it difficult to plan for livestock competitions and events. Show managers must make the best decision for each activity with local, state, and federal regulations and health guidelines in mind. **If a livestock competition or event is to take place, organizers must do their part to protect the health of participants.**

In accordance with Gov. Bill Lee's [Executive Order 38](#), it was acceptable to resume certain social and recreational activities May 22 with a strong focus on the importance of social distancing. Specific guidance for non-contact sporting events and activities from the Governor's Economic Recovery Group can be viewed [online](#).

The Tennessee State Veterinarian's office consulted with University of Tennessee Extension officials and considered Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [guidelines for community events](#) to minimize risk of COVID-19 infection.

Based on those discussions, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture makes the following recommendations for all livestock competitions and events. Policy enforcement is the responsibility of show management.

Before the event

- Be aware of the COVID-19 situation in the community where the venue is located. It is not advisable to hold an event in an area with significant community transmission.
- Familiarize yourself with local, state, and federal guidelines to slow the spread of COVID-19. The community where the venue is located may have additional restrictions in place.
- Speak with the venue manager. Discuss expectations, including any new procedures for the facility and sanitization practices.
- Signs should be posted throughout the venue to encourage people to maintain at least 6 feet of distance. If possible, use ground markings to indicate spacing where lines may form. Consider using signs and/or staffing to keep foot traffic flowing in one consistent direction through busy areas.
- Require pre-registration to eliminate in-person interaction on site.
- Develop flexible refund policies. Allow participants to stay home without penalty if they are sick, need to care for someone who is sick, or are at high risk for complications from COVID-19.
- Reduce the size and duration of the show to minimize time spent on site. Consider limiting the number of participants overall and in individual classes.
- If appropriate, consider hosting all or parts of the competition virtually via livestream or through submitted photos or video.
- Determine what you will do if you must postpone or cancel the event. Make clear to participants how they will be notified if last-minute changes occur.

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During the event

- Any person showing any signs of illness should stay home. Consider the use of [COVID-19 symptom](#) screening questions and/or signage.
- Implement cleaning and disinfection practices according to [CDC recommendations](#), with frequent disinfection of shared/common or high-touch surfaces.
- Provide handwashing or sanitizing stations for participants throughout the venue.
- No matter if the event is indoors or outside, [CDC recommends](#) wearing cloth face coverings in settings where it is difficult to maintain at least 6 feet of distance between people. Note that children under age two should NOT wear cloth face coverings because of the danger of suffocation.
- Participants should not congregate. At least 6 feet of distance must be maintained between people, including in the prep areas, at the gate, and while in the show ring. Additional show staff may be needed in these areas to provide reminders and guidance to participants.
- Parking areas, campgrounds, tie areas, and stalls should be set up and managed so that at least 6 feet of distance can be maintained between family groups.
- Require all attendees—including exhibitors, family members, and spectators—to sign in at arrival. Consider electronic or mobile sign-in options, disinfect shared pens, and maintain at least 6 feet of distance between those waiting to sign in.
- Spectators should be limited and if present, appropriate distancing maintained. It is advised to restrict access to bleachers or group seating areas. Consider providing a livestream of the competition online.
- Children who are not competing should stay home. Children who do attend must always be accompanied by an adult. Ensure that children comply with applicable guidelines for appropriate distancing and use of face coverings.
- Participants should leave the event venue as soon as they have finished showing.
- Group meals should be prohibited.
- Water fountains should be closed.
- Concession sales should follow the [Tennessee Pledge guidelines for restaurants](#) as applicable. Eliminate self-serve stations including beverage and/or condiment dispensers and restrict access to tables and group eating areas.
- **Communicate and enforce new policies with exhibitors and the public.** Make expectations clear to participants before the event and consider using signs and staff to provide reminders and guidance during the event.

These recommendations do not replace or supersede any requirements applicable to your operations pursuant to law or regulation. These guidelines are intended as a supplement to assist with safe operations during the COVID-19 pandemic and are subject to change.

Access the latest information on Tennessee's response to COVID-19 [online](#) and follow @TNAgriculture on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for updates.

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